

Regional Transportation Commission August 30, 2006

Lynne Griffith, CEO



SERVICE OPTIONS



Fixed Route



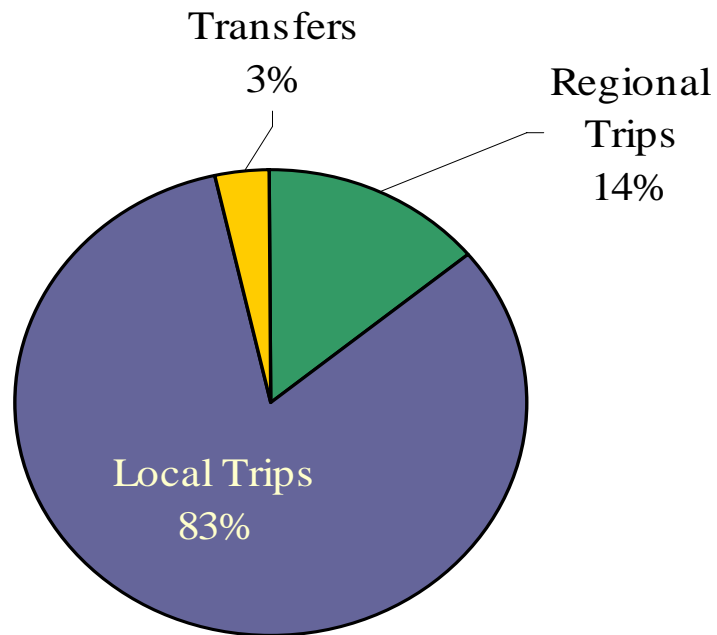
SHUTTLE



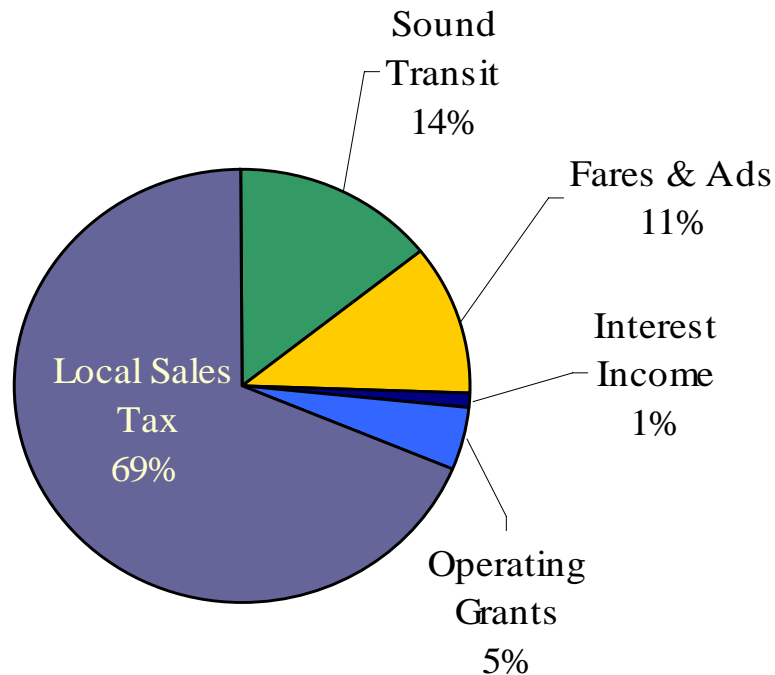
Vanpool



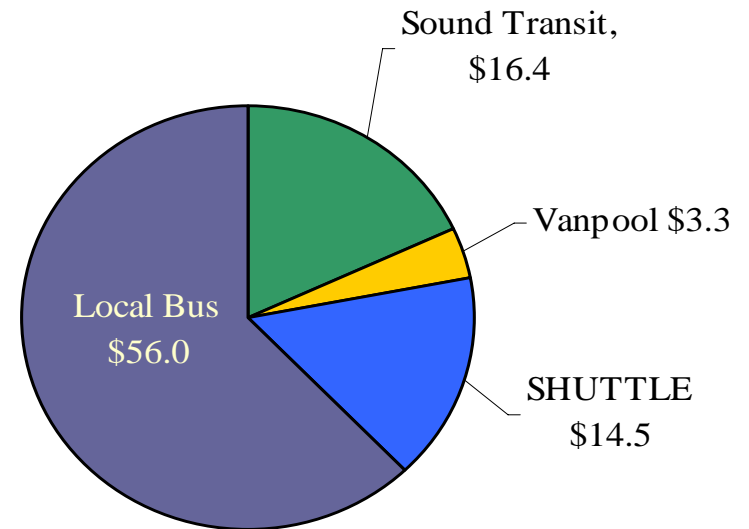
Sound Transit Express

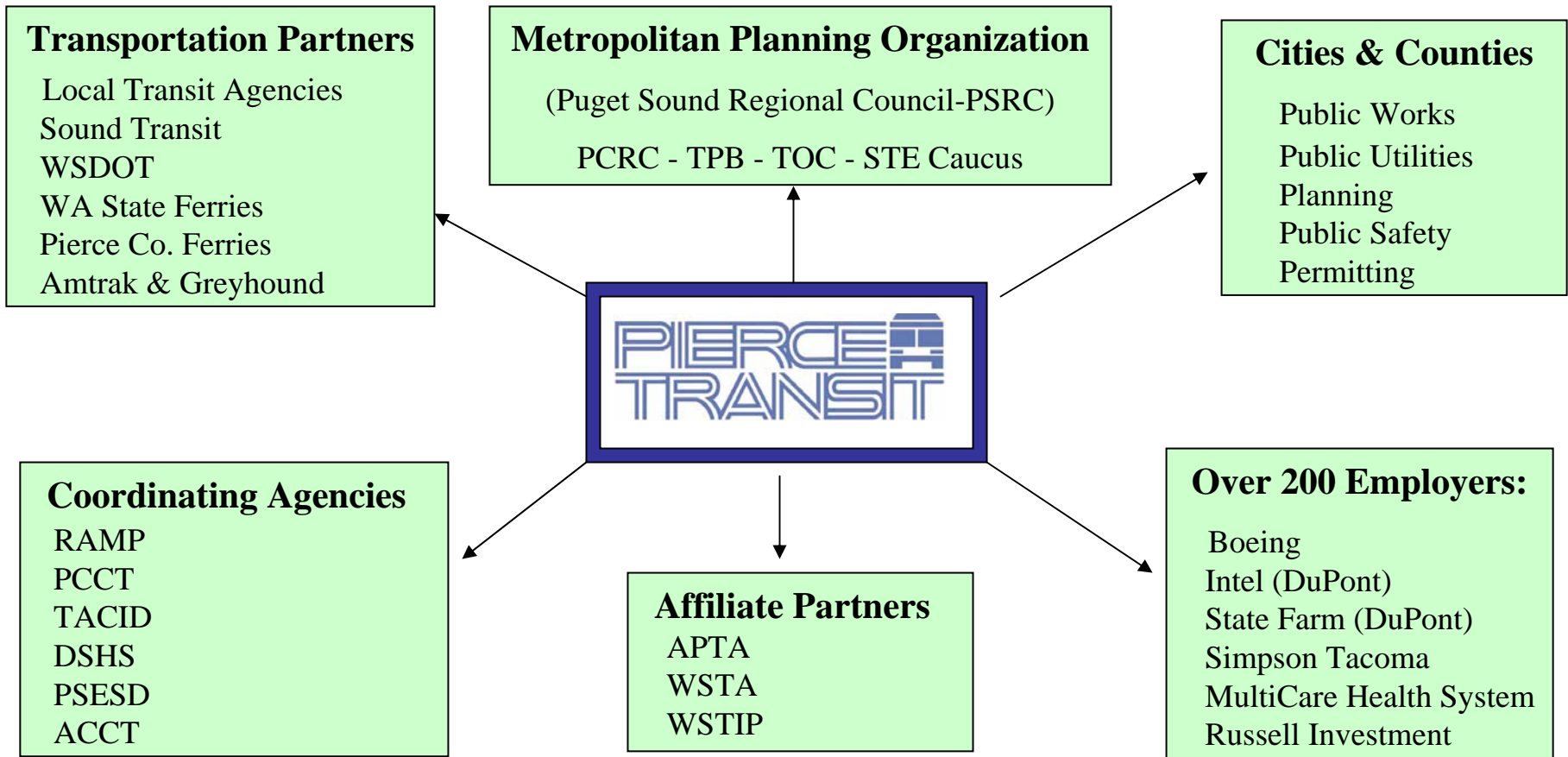


FUNDING SOURCES



EXPENSES BY MODE







Tacoma Dome Station



Federal Way Connections



Tacoma Link



Sounder Connection

Beyond the Borders

Two Transportation services that connect with PT in South Pierce County

1. Beyond the Borders

If you are a senior, a person with a disability, or a low income resident of Pierce County and live outside of the Pierce Transit service area, you are eligible for free transportation services from your home to a Pierce Transit bus stop in Graham or at the Wal-Mart on Highway 7. From these stops you can connect to the Pierce Transit Service Area. To complete the eligibility process call: 1-800-562-0336.

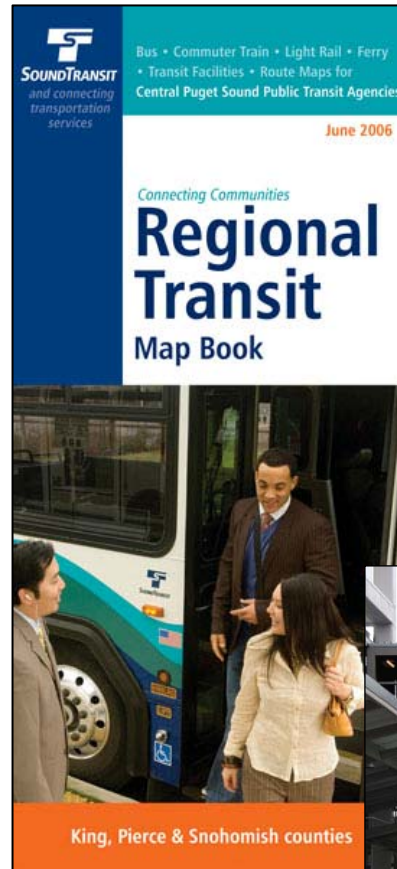
To schedule a ride you must call the customer service representative at 1-800-651-6057, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. All rides must be requested at least 24 hours before the ride is needed. Call 1-800-562-0336, visit piercesoundertides.com, or call the Eatonville Community Center at 360-832-6805.

2. L.E.W.I.S. Mountain Highway Transit






This Monday-Friday service is open to the public, including those who ride Beyond the Borders service. For more information, call 360-496-5404, or 1-800-994-8899.





- Access to information
- Joint marketing
- Facility coordination
- Tell our story better









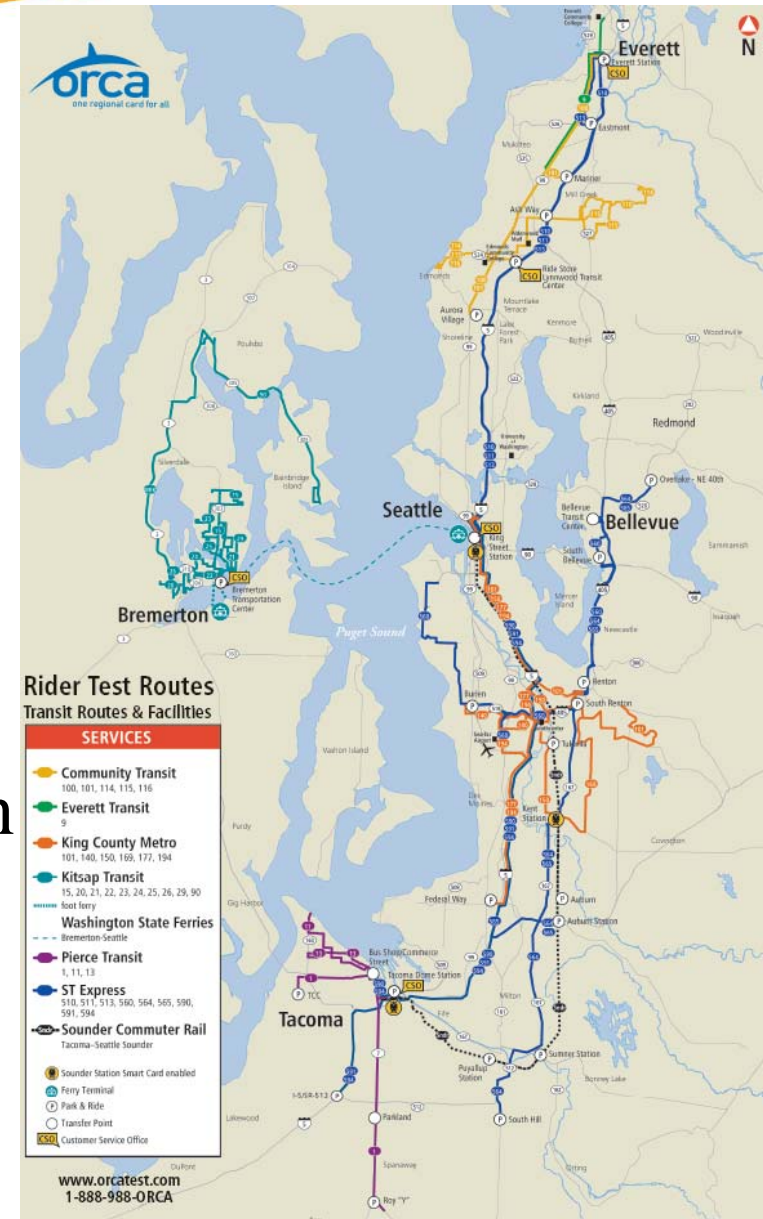
Consolidating transportation/transit service delivery potential impacts:

-  Eliminate local decision-making authority
-  Reduce political accountability
-  Increase, rather than decrease, complexity
-  Change voter-approved taxing & governance structures
-  Distance local land-use decisions from transportation

-  Consolidating transportation funding will reduce the resources available for local projects & services
-  Consolidating Sound Transit & local transit agencies may cause edges of community to slip out of service net



-  Build on partnerships that work
-  Improve transit/highway planning
-  Focus on regional projects
-  Provide flexible funding
-  Let local transit serve local needs
-  Strengthen land-use/transportation planning



**Regional Transportation Commission
Pierce County Hearing
August 30, 2006
Comments by Lynne Griffith, CEO
Pierce Transit**

Today, I plan to provide a very brief overview of Pierce Transit and will focus the majority of my comments on highlighting the local and regional programs that work, discuss areas where we can improve, and identify the potential impacts and opportunities in forming a new regional governance.

Pierce Transit was founded in 1979 when local voters approved a 0.3% sales tax to fund public transportation. Since then, voters have approved an additional 0.3% to support the system.

Our transit service is provided in a 414 square mile service area that is comprised of both urban and rural communities. We provide a vital link to the regional transportation system with buses connecting to Sound Transit, Intercity Transit, and King County Metro.

Pierce Transit provides a variety of transportation options including local fixed route bus, complementary ADA paratransit service known as SHUTTLE, Bus PLUS, a new hybrid service that provides fixed route scheduled and on-demand service to residents living in low-density and rural areas of the county. We also operate over 300 vanpools and Sound Transit Express Service regionally.

Our service is predominantly local. Pierce Transit ridership statistics show over 1.2 million passenger trips were provided by our agency in July 2006. Pierce Transit local bus service provided nearly 1 million (997,258) of those trips with Sound fixed providing the balance. (162,153)

The majority of our funding comes from local sources including sales tax, passenger fares, advertising revenue, and interest income. Collectively, they represent 79% of all funding received by Pierce Transit. Nearly 70% of our operating expenses are spent on local Pierce County services.

There are many examples of local coordination with other transportation partners. We work closely with our local jurisdictions and actively collaborate with over 200 Pierce County employers. We are particularly proud of the leadership our community has provided regionally and throughout the state in coordination of services through the work of the Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition.

There are also many regional programs and partnerships that are working well. The Tacoma Dome Station was the first true multimodal transportation facility in the Northwest. It serves as a major transfer center for the Sounder, Greyhound, Amtrak, Tacoma Link, Sound Transit, Intercity, and Pierce Transit express and local services.

The Beyond the Borders program provides a transportation link for elderly, low income, and disabled citizens living in rural Pierce County outside the Pierce Transit service area. Vans transport individuals from their home to Pierce Transit bus stops where they can connect to other

Pierce Transit and neighboring system services. Pierce Transit assisted in creating this service and continues to support its operation.

Our buses also connect to Sounder at the Tacoma Dome, Puyallup, and Sumner stations and to both Sound Transit and King County Metro buses at the Federal Way Transit Center.

There are areas where transit can improve regional coordination. First, we need to improve access to information, which is critical to transit riders navigating the region. Sound Transit has recently published an excellent information tool, the Regional Transit Map Book (SHOW PROP). The guide includes route information for all Puget Sound transit agencies, hours of service, and a regional system map. We can build upon this helpful publication.

Second, marketing efforts could be pooled for targeted purposes and to collectively promote public transportation and its benefits, increase public understanding and support, and to grow transit's market share.

Development of transit facilities including transit centers, park & rides, passenger amenities, and major transit investments such as Bus Rapid Transit and HOV lanes could be better coordinated to ensure safe and attractive facilities are available throughout the region.

Collectively, we need to tell our story better. I am fairly new to the Puget Sound and like many citizens around the state, I heard agencies didn't coordinate or plan well together. I was prepared for the worse in moving to the area, but surprised and pleased to experience just how well our regional transportation partners and local agencies work together.

While the Commission's charge is broad, I will focus today on the issues related to consolidating the region's transit agencies into a single agency. Forming a new regional governance has potential impacts at the local level.

Consolidation could result in a loss in local decision-making authority.

1. How will local projects and services be funded under a single regional agency?
2. Will services and dollars be allocated based on population, densities, economic conditions, or community need?

Pierce Transit and its Board of Commissioners currently make these decisions in an efficient and timely manner that considers the interests of our customers.

Political accountability currently rests with our Board, which is comprised of local elected officials from Pierce County, the City of Tacoma, and our smaller cities. Citizens communicate with these local officials about their transit needs. A single regional transit agency would likely be geographically & politically removed from Pierce County resulting in reduced political accountability for our citizens.

Consolidating transit agencies will increase, rather than decrease, the complexity of our transportation system. Transportation governance and the coordination of planning and operations is complex today. A single regional agency could add another decision layer to an already complex structure.

Significant changes to voter approved taxing and governance structures would be necessary. Voters have continued to support transit funding measures throughout the region with the expectation the funds would be spent on local transit services and improvements. Also, a new regional taxing authority may require a taxing level that is significantly higher than the transit tax currently being collected in our community.

Consolidating transit into one agency will further distance local land-use policies from transportation decisions. Land use is "owned" by the individual cities and counties. A governance change impacting transit only will not improve the coordination needed between the local land-use authority and the transit operator.

Consolidating transportation funding will reduce the resources available for local projects and services. Our service and funding is overwhelmingly local in nature. Local taxpayers have made a substantial investment in Pierce Transit, which is one of the reasons 82% of our service operates entirely within Pierce County.

Our local bus service links Pierce County urban areas to suburban and low density, emerging areas. Our most dense area, the City of Tacoma, is only ½ the density of the City of Seattle. As a result, the transit service design needed in Pierce County is significantly different than that needed in King County. We designed our service to cost effectively meet our community's needs factoring local densities, population, and income levels.

A single regional transit agency could redirect tax dollars collected in Pierce County to major regional projects outside our community. Although important, essential local services that contribute to our community's quality of life could be at risk. Cost-effective low-density and rural transit service like Bus PLUS could be lost. Significant inequities could arise between each county because of different populations, tax base, and economic conditions that local transit agencies have been able to successfully address under current governing structures.

Our residents know Pierce Transit is their local bus company and understand Sound Transit provides regional transit services. We support our region's priorities and work collaboratively with the PSRC and Sound Transit. Our partnerships are working.

Consolidating Sound Transit with Pierce Transit and other local transit agencies could cause the edges of our local community to drop from the transportation net altogether and Pierce County citizens could experience an increased transit tax without realizing needed transit improvements. We are asking the Commission to support us in doing what we do best...serve our local community.

A new regional governance structure could also present opportunities to improve the regional transportation system.

First, it is important to build off partnerships that work. A new governance structure must build a clear, broadly supported regional vision that ensures critical regional projects are completed while maintaining the knowledge and sensitivity towards local transportation issues.

Second, a new regional governance structure could help strengthen and improve transit & highway planning. Highway and transit planning need to be integrated at two levels. First, an integrated structure should address congestion along highways of regional significance. This is why Sound Transit and the RTID are coordinating improvement packages citizens are will be asked to fund in November 2007. We believe this form of coordinated planning is appropriate and necessary.

Transit needs should be considered by all levels of government - local, regional and state - when new streets and highway facilities are designed and built. Bus stop pads, passenger shelters, pedestrian improvements, and park & ride facilities could be built at the same time roads are improved leveraging local and state tax dollars while disrupting the traveling public only once.

Third, the Commission should create a decision-making process that is straightforward, easy to understand, and transparent to the public. Any new regional agency should limit its funding and authority to regional projects that reduce traffic in major regional corridors or provide regional bus or rail services. Local transit agencies should continue to provide services that can meet local needs because they understand local issues and have a personal relationship with the customer.

Flexible funding options need to be made available to all transportation modes. Transportation funding is already complicated and many of us must compete for the same limited funding. This is one of the reasons the public perceives transportation agencies do not get along or coordinate. The Commission should seek ways to simplify transportation funding and not to create a new layer that further confuses the public.

Ensuring adequate funding is available to provide quality transit services does not rest with local and state taxpayers alone. Transit agencies need to continue to seek ways to become more efficient and cost effective. Smart bus technology and other innovative business strategies are needed to help streamline our operations and reduce the cost of doing business. Consolidating the complex work environments of multiple agencies into one larger organization will not necessarily create the efficiencies or cost effectiveness expected by our citizens.

Fourth, ensure local funding continues to support local transportation needs. Do not let the edges of our communities slip out of the transit service net. For some people, our buses are the only way to get around. As the region moves to address the traffic congestion that impacts urban areas, please don't diminish our ability to address the needs of our smaller cities, niche markets, and areas of low-income, elderly, and disabled populations.

If Governance changes are to occur, consider how land-use planning can be integrated into transportation decision-making. Transportation impacts that include increased congestion and travel time delays can be directly linked to land-use decisions. Coordinating land-use planning and transportation decisions more closely can help improve regional traffic conditions, provide efficiencies to businesses and individuals, and help extend the life and capacity of the transportation investments made in the region.

Thank you for your attention. I will be happy any questions you may have.

PIERCE TRANSIT QUICK FACTS

SERVICE PROFILE

- Fixed route service operates 48 bus routes with a fleet of 221 clean-burning compressed natural gas buses. An average of 40,000 passenger trips occur each weekday and a total of 12.2 million passenger trips annually.
- ADA specialized transportation service (SHUTTLE) compliments the fixed route system with over 440,000 trips being provided to eligible people with disabilities each year.
- Bus PLUS has been very successful since being implemented in 2003. Annual passenger trips totaled 64,500 in 2005.
- The vanpool program serves over 2,200 Pierce County residents with riders paying 85% of the program's operating cost. Over 732,000 passenger trips were provided in 2005.
- We also operate 77 Sound Transit Express buses between Pierce County and Seattle. Sound Transit service provides an average of 7,000 passenger trips each weekday with over 2 million passenger trips occurring annually.

FACILITIES

Pierce Transit operates and maintains 8 transit center, 19 park & ride facilities, and has over 3,300 bus stops throughout Pierce County.

REVENUE

- 67% - Local Sales Tax - \$72,177,600
- 18% - Sound Transit reimbursement - \$16,445,500 to operate their express bus service
- 11% - Fares and Advertising - \$11,759,600 – the farebox recovery is actually higher than 11% (16-19%) with only 11% of the revenue from fares being allocated to the operating budget and the rest applied to capital.
- 6% - Operating Assistance - \$5,959,200 (State CTR/Special Needs & FTA Preventive Maintenance grant funding)
- 1% - Interest Income & Other - \$762,100
- 2006 annual revenue is expected to be \$107,455,700.

EXPENSES

- Local fixed route service represents 55.2% of our costs at \$56 million annually.
- Sound Transit contracted service is 6.2% of our costs at \$16.4 million annually.
- Pierce Transit's ADA paratransit service, SHUTTLE, represents 14.3% of the annual budget at \$14.5 million annually, and finally,
- Our Vanpool program is 3.3% of our budget with a cost of \$3.3 million a year.
- Annual operating expenses are expected to be \$89,027,300 in 2006.

CAPITAL PLANS

Long-range Service & Development Plans: The agency's current 6-year transit development plan includes service expansion over the next 5 years, \$166 million in capital improvements, and identifies \$91 million of needed capital improvements that are not funded.

MARKET RESEARCH

A 2004 survey indicated 90% of the respondents are somewhat or very satisfied with Pierce Transit services. A survey that was completed just weeks ago, but not yet finalized, indicates 80-89% of the respondents believe Pierce Transit services are affordable, convenient, safe, reduces traffic, and contributes to improving the quality of life in our community.

Pierce Transit local riders use transit locally for the following reasons:

- 33% travel to work
- 21% travel to school/college
- 20% use transit to get to appointments.
- 16% use the system to shop or run errands
- 10% ride the bus for recreation or social purposes

ACRONYMS:

- ACCT - Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation
- APTA - American Public Transportation Association
- PCCT - Pierce County Coordinated Transportation Coalition
- PCRC - Pierce County Regional Council
- PSESD - Puget Sound Educational Services District
- RAMP - Regional Access Mobility Project
- SRC - Puget Sound Regional Council
- STE - Seattle/Tacoma/Everett Caucus
- TACID - Tacoma Area Coalition for Individuals with Disabilities
- TOC - Transit Operators Committee
- TPB - Transportation Policy Board
- WSTA - Washington State Transit Association
- WSTIP - Washington State Transit Insurance Pool